



The Wilmington Learning Collaborative Feedback to Date

Wilmington Schools. Wilmington Voices.

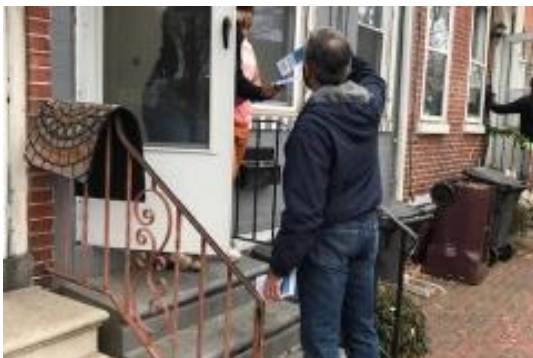
April 2022

Summary

This report captures feedback from over 200 meetings, Zooms, phone calls, one-on-one and small group meetings, and presentations. Dating back to August 2021, the State began to engage community leaders, educators, families, students, and elected officials around the concept of the Wilmington Learning Collaborative (WLC). The WLC's goals include empowering educators and school leaders to have building-based autonomies and flexibilities to best meet their students' needs. Each school would have a designated Educator Leader Team to work with the building administration on key decisions and a Community Council to ensure community and family voices are helping to drive school priorities and decisions. To support, nourish, and preserve this concept, a community-based governing board will be established, comprised of district and school board leaders and community leaders/experts. Since Wilmington is divided into numerous districts, the WLC governing board and a small team solely focused on these schools would help create consistency across the city, foster collaboration across districts, minimize the impact of student mobility, and drive student achievement and wellness.

While no model is perfect, this concept has shown promise in areas across the country and includes evidence-based components that have led to meaningful results for children. Dating back to the 2001 Wilmington Neighborhood Schools Committee report, numerous community-driven groups and efforts have all proposed meaningful, holistic solutions to strengthen city schools. On the contrary, previous state and federal efforts have furthered distrust between families, schools, and government. With all that said, there is broad agreement that children, families, and educators deserve better. That is what the WLC is all about. Delivering results for children, families, and educators by empowering those closest to children to meet their needs.

The feedback in this document reflects views, beliefs, and suggestions from those who have attended meetings, joined Zooms and calls, given public comment, attended small group meetings, and participated in numerous engagement opportunities. We have tried to include as much of that feedback in this document, even if at times we did not agree with everything said.



Summer 2021

To begin engaging community and educational leaders around the concept of the WLC, we started meeting with key stakeholders in late summer of 2021. The goal of these meetings was to share with key stakeholders that we intended to work with them to create a structure to place a hyper-focus on city schools and empower those closest to children with flexibility and decision-making to meet their students' needs. Conversations led to the following feedback.

Extended Learning Opportunities:

- Extended school day and school year services are needed.
- Programs need to be adequately staffed with properly compensated full-time employees and should use evidence-based best practices.

Wraparound Services:

- On-site preventative health services are needed.
- This plan should foster the conditions for community schools in Wilmington. That framework includes curriculum that is proven/culturally relevant, high-quality teaching and learning, inclusive leadership, positive behavior supports/restorative justice, family and community partnerships, and coordinated/integrated wraparound supports. Consider a community school coordinator at each school and a school-based needs assessment when the process is created.
- This effort must focus on support to the whole city and whole family. Consider leveraging the dual-gen model to expand services.
- Address housing and poverty.

Early Start:

- Wilmington needs more geographically convenient, daylong, high-quality pre-k for three- and four-year-old students in the feeder patterns of participating elementary schools.

Communication and Engagement:

- Clear communication is critical to keep the community involved.
- Engage parents on the front end.
- Involve teachers early and often. They will tell you if something can work and they will see the challenges.
- Educator engagement will be key to this project's success.

Many Previous Efforts:

- Given the numerous past efforts, designing the WLC must include frequent and transparent engagement of educators and stakeholders.
- There have been so many past efforts. Be mindful of the broken trust from top-down reforms and make sure this is grounded in empowering those who are doing the work and live in the community.
- There have been so many past efforts to reform education in the city so proceed with intention to make this enduring and collaborative.

Model:

- The intermediary should involve a trusted partner.
- Being a coalition of the willing is critical to its success.
- The model seems like a fit with labor management collaboration models used and supported by NEA.
- We should learn from the results of similar successful efforts.
- Needs to put a spotlight on equity in programs: band, performing arts, sports, etc.
- Consider some sort of high school pathway.
- Leadership is going to be key. Get great leaders and build a deep bench.
- Who is on the board and how they get there matters.
- Autonomy at the school level is exciting.
- Cross-district collaboration is a positive element of this plan.
- Governing board needs to ensure the city has a say.
- Stabilization and sustainability are key.

Resources:

- In order to strengthen schools, adequate resources are needed.
- These resources (and existing ones) should be deployed to create learning environments that are innovative and meet student needs.

Educator Supports:

- High-level professional development for teachers and staff should be supported.
- The City Wage Tax may serve as a deterrent for educators to teach in city schools.

Top Recurring Feedback:

- Be wary of reform fatigue. There have been many past efforts.
- Family, educator, and community engagement is key.
- Take a holistic approach to improving education in the city.
- The model needs to be sustainable.

Lingering Questions and Concerns:

- What role do charters have here?
- Be careful about any partner trying to monetize this like some did with Race to the Top.
- What happens to the rest of the district?
- Be careful to make this systems change and NOT a shiny new effort.
- What is the role of the district and how can duplication be avoided?
- How would special education liability be handled?
- What is the role of the governing board that is being proposed here?
- Is there a way to innovatively provide better transportation options for students?
- How will funding work?
- How will the governing board be composed? This will be a challenge.
- How will details about employment, MOUs, roles, and responsibilities be worked out?

Fall 2021

To continue engaging community and educational leaders around the concept of the Wilmington Learning Collaborative, we spent the fall of 2021 broadening our engagement. These meetings reached more and more groups and led to a greater understanding of the challenges our schools face each day. In addition to meetings, the Governor went out on numerous occasions to knock on doors across the city and speak with families at their doorstep to invite them to meetings and hear about their experiences and suggestions. The public meetings included presentations to community groups, schools, and school boards, which yielded great feedback. Public meetings included:

- November 4th Redding Consortium Meeting (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KGTOPgTB5jE>)
- November 9th Christina School Board Meeting (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Udm3-nKrYzk&t=1490s>)
- November 15th Brandywine School Board Meeting (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nr3B5BdLxol>)
- November 17th Red Clay School Board Meeting (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q-nIskiMhyU>)
- November 30th Christina School Board Workshop (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OttJR08O1OQ>)
- December 6th Virtual Town Hall with DelawarePTA (https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&v=955983601941628)
- December 7th Christina School Board Meeting (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VAYfk93zEl4&t=1300s>)
- December 10th Virtual Visit (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oDoiRGYMVU0>)
- December 13th Brandywine School Board Meeting (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x5uxsf1xcPs>)
- December 14th Community Information Session at Pulaski (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f01gY3NjRIM&t=154s>)
- December 15th Red Clay School Board Meeting (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lp9qmFqiOjA>)
- December 16th Community Information Session at Warner (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nCZxOjplHrg>)
- December 20th Community Information Session at Harlan (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8FL6TJwXbvc&t=327s>)

Christina Board Member Donald Patton attended each of the four school information sessions in December, and State Board of Education Member Vince Lofink attended three of four.

Wraparound Services:

- Schools must be community hubs.
- Healthy school meals for students. Consider farm-to-table partnerships.
- Schools must have a restorative justice framework. Must be a restorative approach.
- Leverage non-profit partners for supports.
- Lower caseloads.
- Must meet the needs of the whole family.
- Need mental health support systems.
- Reduce stress for students.
- Family resource centers should be in each school with housing, legal services, and wellness services.
- Schools must have robust wraparound services.
- Trauma informed environments for students.
- Extended day will hurt retention unless done with community partners.
- Year one wins could include wraparound services.
- Need resources and support staff to meet whole child needs.
- Provide mentorship and grief counselors.
- Include mindfulness and mental health supports.
- Focus on measuring absenteeism and presenteeism.
- Supports in place to break the school to prison pipeline.
- Special focus on homeless children.

High School:

- Conversation about the high school component needs to happen.
- Consider adding a city high school as a piece of this.
- Consider a role for Howard.
- HS assignment is important.
- High school transitions are really important.
- Can't end this in 8th grade. Must have path through HS in this MOU process.

Start Early:

- Really need to focus on the early years.
- Focus on building strong foundations.
- Pre-k is so important.
- Focus on 3-5 year-olds.
- Leverage both districts and local community centers/homes.
- Invest resources in more pre-k seats.
- Before and after-care is vital.
- Consider a child care point person.
- Need to support current pre-k options with added help. Can't just expand without strengthening.

Resources:

- Need the resources to make this work.
- Must be tons of resources.
- More resources are critical.
- Funding must be sustainable.
- Private sector/business support could help.

Educator Support:

- Retention is a challenge.
- Laser focus on recruitment and retention.
- Fully staffed buildings would be a great initial win.
- Free up educators. Take unnecessary work off plates.
- Reduce staff stress.
- Supportive coaching is needed.
- Educators are burned out.
- Trauma support for educators.
- Partner with IHE educator preparation programs.
- Need more paras.
- Provide more special education training.
- Help teachers with home ownership.
- Foster better building conditions.
- Teachers need autonomy.
- Building leadership is critical.
- Relevant professional learning is needed.
- Two adults per room would help.
- Elevate teacher voice.
- Higher eds need to play a role.
- Support, recruit, and retain a diverse workforce.
- Teacher and administrator shortage is a huge problem.
- Involve educators in key school-based decisions.
- Pay teachers more.
- Educators want to be involved in school-based decisions.
- Educator input is incredibly important throughout.
- Give teachers the gift of time (prep time).
- Student teachers can be a big help.

Student Achievement:

- Need an engaging, culturally relevant curriculum.
- Smaller class sizes would be a win.
- Schools with effective shared-decision making processes have increased student achievement.
- Equity must be a key driver.
- Laser focus on great teaching and learning.
- Need more Black men in education.
- Need to develop plans to help students who are far behind.
- Need great leaders.
- Longer day and year could be important, but leverage community partners here so we are not asking more of educators.
- Focus on literacy in year one to build momentum.
- Include an arts focus.
- Need culturally relevant materials for students.
- Need more staff to meet student needs.
- Direct and targeted support for students with special needs.
- Need to align the SEL and academic piece.
- Project-based learning and real-world experiences will help.

Flexibility to Meet Needs:

- Flexible hiring of teachers and coverage of City Wage Tax is important.
- Flexibility with funding to meet needs is important.
- Flexibility needed to fill staffing positions.

Reform Fatigue:

- There have been many reform efforts in the past.
- So many MOUs in the past. This is just one more.
- Make sure this is tied to recommendations from the past.
- Be cognizant this is yet another effort.
- There is a very real history of mistrust on reforms.

Family and Community Engagement:

- Go door to door and talk to families.
- Need a mechanism for continued community feedback.
- Make sure City Council is involved.
- There is power in engaging communities. Recapture those we've lost.
- Need to engage those the system failed. The system has worked, but it is designed only for some.
- Meet families where they are.
- Consider adding counseling services for families.
- Focus on reducing impact of mobility.
- Keep engaging stakeholders.
- Include student voice.
- Engage parents and teachers.
- Parent support groups could help.
- Include programs for families.
- Be overt about family engagement.
- Consider stipends to engage families on Community Councils.
- Community connection is critical.
- Need to break down barriers to engagement and meet folks where they are.
- Make sure to engage those who have done the work.
- Elevate the community.
- Need to earn community trust.
- Help families help students with academics.
- Make schools welcoming for parents.
- Be flexible to meet parent needs.
- Parents deserve a voice and the information to empower them.

City Focus:

- Build more dual-gen centers across the city.
- Must address the effects of poverty.
- A unified calendar could be great. Professional learning across districts.
- Need to understand the link between educational outcomes and violence in our city.
- Must have a means to engage the city in some way.
- Must address violence in the community.
- Has to be accountability for the city.
- Engage the City Council in a solution.
- Housing and poverty get in the way of learning.
- Cross-district collaboration and consistency makes sense.
- Potential for cross-registering for classes across WLC.

Model:

- Governing board is important. Superintendents should be members. May want to have a commitment of some kind for board members.
- Include parents and advocates on board.
- Curricular continuity could make sense. Needs to be done thoughtfully.
- This keeps the tax base which is a good thing.
- Must have parents on the board.
- Incentivize participation in the WLC.
- Add student representative on board.
- Needs to be systemic and structural.
- Don't let community councils go to waste.
- Stay student focused.
- Must be student-centered.
- Need more specifics in this plan.
- Build the system so it is sustainable and cannot be undone.
- Reverse the effects of institutional racism.
- Need a root cause analysis.
- Need to identify policies that need addressing.
- Unified governance for Wilmington is the biggest sell.
- Need to coordinate non-profits effectively.
- Governing board is a must, but it will be controversial.
- Need to ensure strong accountability for all parties.
- Leverage higher education to partner.
- Autonomy to focus on students is good, but need parameters.
- Cross-district collaboration is key.
- Must have great leadership.
- Must be comprehensive approach.
- Need dedicated structure with daily energy.
- Model is predicated on hyper-focus on children.
- Include school board members on the governing body.
- Be as transparent as possible.
- City governance is important.
- This needs to outlast us.
- Understand that things are clunky at the beginning. That's okay.
- Empowering and trusting those closest to students is the right approach.
- System should prioritize celebrating successes and sharing them.

Top Recurring Feedback:

- Consider amending the timeline.
- Need great leadership.
- Focus on educator retention. Reduce educator stress and give teachers the gift of time.
- Family and community engagement is a must.
- Need more staff. Need more paras.
- Need real, authentic root cause analysis.
- Community governance and engagement is a win.
- Cross-district collaboration.

Lingering Questions and Concerns:

- What is the impact on and role of the districts?
- How do the districts' turnaround points fit in here?
- Where is the accountability?
- How does this relate to redistricting?
- How can we ensure the governing board is not a disruption?
- Timeline is too ambitious.
- Make sure this is not a bureaucratic process. This cannot add more layers.
- Where does liability go?
- Why are you only focused on Wilmington? There is a need all over the state.
- How are disagreements resolved?
- This would need to be discussed over multiple school board meetings.
- How will budgets work?
- How does this work with the CSI process?
- How is the board appointed?
- Concerns about the governing board and intermediary.
- What authority will the board have?
- How much funding will be allocated here?
- How will the unified curriculum work?
- Does this change feeder patterns?
- How is this different from past efforts?
- What if only one district participates?
- What if districts say no?
- How does common curriculum work with HS?
- How does this mesh with CSD MOU?
- Create an FAQ to help answer questions. *(We subsequently created [this FAQ.](#))*

Winter 2021-2022

Winter brought further community and stakeholder engagement. The process to establish the WLC asked that each board vote in January or February to authorize their superintendent to enter into negotiations to create the WLC. Each board voted unanimously to move forward. The de.gov/WLC page was also up and running and began to generate lots of feedback in early to mid-December. In addition to the dozens of comments we received through that portal, along with Zooms, calls, and meetings, the following public meetings were held or presented at.



- December 21st Community Information Session at Bancroft (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHhNRx5aBec&t=683s>)
- January 11th Christina School Board Meeting (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z3d1-6tHF4Y>)
- January 18th Virtual Spanish Information Session (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kftOudKeyzs>)
- January 18th Friends of Christina School District Meeting (<https://www.facebook.com/FOCSD/videos/2198216756983289>)
- January 19th Red Clay School Board Meeting (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q9aGimoHyZI>)
- February 7th Brandywine School Board Meeting (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EC55o7RiIIM>)
- February 9th Red Clay School Board Meeting (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5bQIGhGP8Lg>)
- March 3rd Stubbs Family Engagement Session
- March 5th Virtual Engagement Session (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=36x8goFHFe4&t=543s>)
- March 9th Harlan Family Engagement Fair
- March 12th Teen Warehouse Family Engagement Fair
- March 16th League of Women Voters Presentation (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=056HkRrlj8k>)

In addition, the Governor's recommended budget included \$7 million for schools participating in the WLC. Feedback from winter meetings and conversations can be found below.

Wraparound Services:

- Include mentoring programs.
- Need stronger school-based systems of support.
- Leverage trusted partners in schools.
- Schools should all be community schools.
- Need more social workers.
- Need more mental health professionals.
- Lots of great and willing partners. Need coordination.
- Housing instability is a big challenge. Help families here.
- Calming rooms would be helpful.
- Must have strong systems of support for students.
- Trauma-responsive schools.
- Need coordination of services.
- Don't discount the importance of food, clothing, laundry, and other needed services.
- Need outside agencies to help in schools.
- Must focus on children in temporary housing.
- Children are in crisis, and we need to help.
- Children should be able to get a physical at school.
- Need more space for counseling.
- Provide forums for movement in schools. Kids need physical activity. Bring back play.
- Preserve green spaces for students.
- Need to address chronic absenteeism.
- Schools must be trauma informed.
- Engaging and enriching after-school programs are key.

Student Achievement:

- Educator diversity will help drive student success.
- Smaller class sizes are key.
- Tutoring and extended day could help students catch up.
- Curriculum should feature diverse books.
- Need focus on middle school readiness.
- Create small learning communities in schools.
- Need more mentors and tutors.
- Prioritize relationships.
- Arts and music programs are important too.
- Fully staffed buildings are critical.
- Expose students to STEM and robotics.
- Need as many adults as possible.
- Focus on improvement and growth.
- Must have equity in programs. Provide robust after-school and summer learning.
- Can't discount the power of social studies and science.
- Must have great leaders.

Early Learning:

- Universal pre-k at age three would be great.
- 0-3 focus for early literacy.
- Create a younger siblings programs.
- Provide transportation if possible.
- Build on Redding pre-k seats.
- Pre-k with transportation.
- Consider Montessori programming.
- Joint professional learning between early childhood and elementary school partners.
- Help our youngest learners with special needs get on the right track.
- More early learning seats in city schools.
- Dual-gen approach should be used more.

Resources:

- Financial support that is ongoing is a must.
- Funding must be flexible and come in waves so mid-year needs can be met.

High School:

- Howard is a great option for students who want to stay close to home.
- Support middle school students with choice.
- Provide transportation to boost involvement.
- Need someone to coordinate high school piece.
- Consider a traditional high school in the city someday.

Family and Community Engagement:

- Parent focus groups at each school.
- We need to identify and help the families we are not reaching.
- Focus on family needs.
- Must be authentic family engagement.
- Partner with organizations to support families.
- Re-examine parent engagement policies.
- Families must see that their feedback matters.
- Bring joy to family engagement. Need child care, food, raffles.
- Make sure to support grandparents too.
- Need to work with Spanish speaking families to engage them better.

City Focus:

- A city-based think tank is a great idea.
- Help children who want to stay close to home with choice.
- Get creative with transportation to help with student consistency.
- Expand the dual-gen approach across the city.
- Helping with student mobility issue would go a long way.
- Gun violence is linked to education. City needs a say in helping improve education.

Educator Support:

- Need more paras in schools. Create a pipeline for them to also become teachers.
- Too much unneeded professional learning and meetings.
- Need more staff, mental health professionals, and interventionists.
- Residencies are a crucial piece here. Need funding for recruitment.
- Continue educator engagement.
- Need top technology in these schools.
- Educator ownership over this effort is needed.
- Consider loan forgiveness for educators. Teacher retention is a key goal.
- Focus on educator pipelines and substitutes to help.
- Co-teaching model would be great.
- Working conditions need improvement.
- Teacher pay must increase.
- Engage teachers in this process.
- Take things off teachers' plates.
- Must keep great teachers in the classroom.
- More planning time needed, especially for special education teachers.

Reform Fatigue:

- So many efforts have blamed teachers in the past.
- Past efforts have not delivered.
- Other efforts have been a flash in the pan.

Model:

- Teachers need flexibility.
- Shared curriculum could be helpful with mobility issues.
- Pacing needs to be addressed so staff are not rushing through content.
- Must start work with a root cause analysis.
- Make sure you remove bureaucracy.
- This is an intentional effort around several needed areas.
- Evaluate early and often to make sure this is working.
- Educator leader teams are a strong model.
- Define Community Councils better.
- One MOU is preferable to three.
- Take best practices from similar schools around the country that have seen success.
- Board must reflect the community.
- Board members should have liaison schools.
- Empowering educators and leaders is a good foundation.
- Need clear goals for this effort.
- Formally engage IHEs.
- Must be a mechanism in MOU for leaving if objectives aren't being met.
- Build in the idea of teacher liaisons.
- Help bring success to scale.
- Create mechanism to share best practices.

Top Recurring Feedback:

- Trauma-responsive schools are a must.
- Take things off of educators' plates so they can focus on teaching.
- Address staff burnout and fully staff buildings to improve retention.
- Innovative added learning time with community partners. High-quality partnerships are critical to student success. Need a centralized coordination.
- Need more staff.
- Authentically engage families.
- Bring in arts, music, and sports for enrichment.
- Early learning is key to ensure children enter kindergarten ready to learn.

Lingering Questions and Concerns:

- What if districts say no?
- What incentives are there for districts to join?
- What is the makeup of the board? This can't be the same people doing the same things.
- Don't rush this. Timeline feels too rushed.
- What supports are there for non-city schools with city students.
- What is the relationship to the Redding Consortium?

Spring 2022

Engagement has continued to date this spring, following the successful Board votes and the beginnings of the MOU drafting process. In addition to Zooms, calls, and meetings, we have continued public engagement forums. These include:

- March 22nd Family Engagement Fair at the Wilmington Public Library
- March 24th Family Engagement Fair at the Latin American Community Center
- *April 27th Family Engagement Event at Hicks Anderson Community Center
- *April 30th Virtual Engagement Session

** Events have not taken place as of the publishing of this report.*

Wraparound Services:

- Extended school day needs to be rich with arts and sports and staffed by community partners.
- Services must be embedded in schools.
- Opt-out clauses versus opt-in so we can serve more students.
- Design engaging after-school programs for students.
- Must seek to meet whole child needs.
- Create break areas for students.
- Data systems exist to monitor that children are getting the appropriate services.
- CBO partnerships are really important.
- Consider a collaborative care model.
- Design systems to focus on the highest risk students.

Educator Support:

- We are losing so many staff members. Must support educators in challenging environments.
- Leverage student teachers and residencies.
- Too many unnecessary meetings.
- Pay teachers more.
- Provide support for classroom management.
- Higher education partnerships to reduce number of vacancies in schools.
- Get rid of unnecessary professional learning.
- Need more paras and a class size cap.
- Need more planning time.

Early Childhood:

- Need to have a strong early focus for students.
- This system should also support an early education collaborative in the city.

High School:

- Lay out a path for addressing the high school component.

City Focus:

- Connect this effort to housing insecurity and violence.

Student Achievement:

- Focus on science of reading and training.
- Need more adults so we can do small group activities.
- More specialized classes such as radio, AP courses, and STEM.
- Field trips that relate to learning would be great.
- Strong leadership is critical.
- More engaging and culturally relevant curricula.
- Recruit educators who live in the city.
- Early literacy focus is critical.

Family and Community Engagement:

- Need help and capacity for family engagement.
- Coordinate groups that have a track record of supporting parents.
- Parent buy-in is needed. Start in the early years.
- Continue engaging the community in the planning of this.
- Must engage students.
- Present families with clear data.
- Build community champions and take lessons from successes in places like Boston.

Model:

- Needs to be a system that is set up, not a fad.
- Ensure there is accountability for the WLC and reporting to the districts.
- Questions about how this has worked elsewhere.
- Must allow and empower teachers to speak up.
- Must help us think outside the box.
- Create systems for collaboration.
- Leaders need autonomy.
- Address schools not in the city who serve city students.
- Allow teachers to choose relevant professional learning.
- Must celebrate academic growth.
- Community Councils cannot go to waste. Pay folks for their time.
- Root cause analysis is critical.
- Schedules need flexibility.
- Must be a dedicated focus on this effort.
- Have some common parameters, but allow schools to innovate.
- Be clear what the connection is between Community Councils, Educator Leader Teams, WLC, and districts.
- Must have a connective relationship with Redding.

Top Recurring Feedback:

- Need more paraprofessionals.
- Be intentional about family engagement.
- Conduct a root cause analysis.
- Educator diversity is critical.
- Dual focus on academic and social-emotional needs.

Lingering Questions and Concerns:

- Lots of feedback both for, and cautious of, a shared curriculum.
- How does this model work with Lewis, which is a dual-language school?

March 2022 Engagement Meetings

Throughout the month of March, we held six community meetings. These took place at Stubbs, virtually, at Harlan, at the Teen Warehouse, at the Wilmington Public Library, and at the Latin American Community Center. While feedback has been incorporated in this report, more specific and full feedback is outlined below. Attendance ranged from 15-40 or so depending on the event. At the recommendation of SAFE Schools, these events took on a different feel than the December town halls. These events consisted of smaller group discussions, some had stations for attendees to rotate through, and each event featured child care, food, and a raffle for attendees. Sessions were facilitated by a combination of DOE, the Governor's office, DHSS, and a city educator. Special thanks to our hosts Stubbs, Harlan, the Teen Warehouse, the Wilmington Public Library, and the Latin American Community Center for their hospitality. A special recognition also goes to Dr. Naveed Baqir from the Christina School Board, who attended each of the engagement meetings, and Ms. Wanda Elder, who attended all but one. A special thanks also goes to Bancroft teacher Karen Eller, who co-facilitated breakout groups at three of the meetings.

Suggestions to Strengthen City Schools

1. Social Activities with schools using international model
2. Teacher exchange program - study abroad (Summer Program)
3. Integration of age during lunch + social
4. Child care support
5. Clinical mental health in school

Suggestions to Strengthen City Schools

1. School leader flexibility to meet needs of kids - spending, creating curricula, training, teacher decision making
- 2.
3. Teacher incentives as ladders - degrees
4. Relevance \leftarrow what kids learn what teachers are taught
5. Stars in each room regardless of current formula
6. Opening our thinking about teacher pipelines and community incentives

Other Notes

Severed for the potential structural changes this

Collaborative will enable

Pragmatic, life skills.

Field trips: experiential learning, thematic learning, integrated learning \Rightarrow Relevance.

Suggestions to Strengthen City Schools

1. Professional Development
 2. School weekly General Assembly + Group Grade Assembly
 3. Weekend, Comprehensive After School Programs
 4. Gear Up Program (DDOE)
 5. Revisiting Busing Policy (1-2 miles walk to school) Skills Development Program
- Other Notes - Revisitation of Technical + Academic School Prefect (Per Supports)
- In school Sports for all students
- Revision of students celebration + rewards

1. Extend the same funding, resources, and expectations as non-city schools
2. Limit involvement to those who are personally invested in the growth and sustainability of the school
3. Raise expectations and remove negative assumptions towards "city" students and environments

Suggestions to Strengthen City Schools

1. Potential for realizing districts feeder patterns for neighborhood schools
- 2.

Stubbs Family Engagement Meeting – March 3

Academics Group:

- Address truancy as well as the transient piece impacting academic performance.
- Train parents and caregivers to help students succeed.
- Increase vocational opportunities for students.
- Social emotional learning and behavioral wellbeing.
 - Need to support the wellbeing of students, staff, and admins.
- Professional learning should be grade level specific, be tailored to urban schools, and have a strong special education component.
- Consider a culturally responsive curriculum for students.
- Need more staff per room and lower class sizes at all ages.
- Schools should be safe environments. Admins should lead with love, support educators/families/students, and listen. Prioritize relationships. Build trust.
- Leverage out of school learning. Look at enrichment and include more movement during the day.
- Engage the business community to support schools.
- Revamp teacher preparation.

Wraparound Services Group:

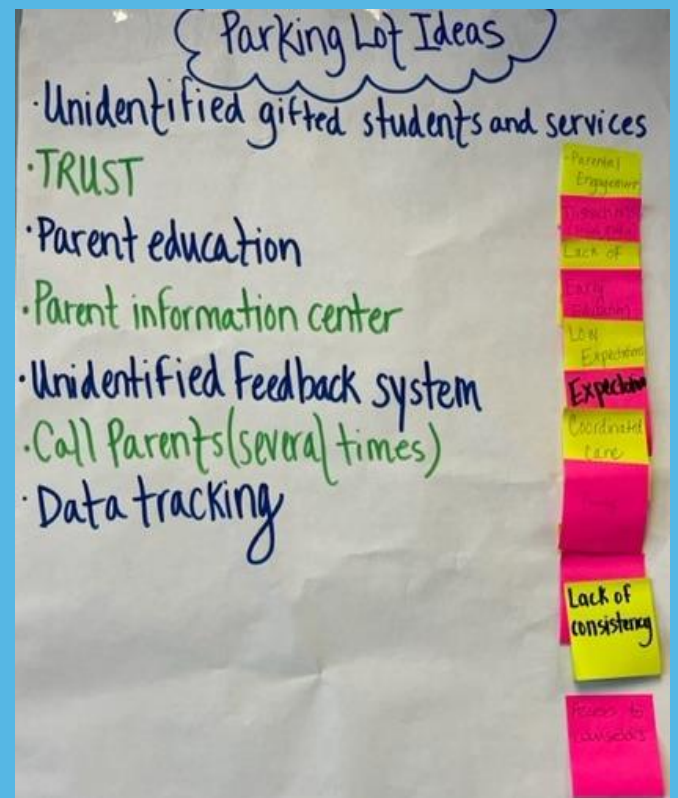
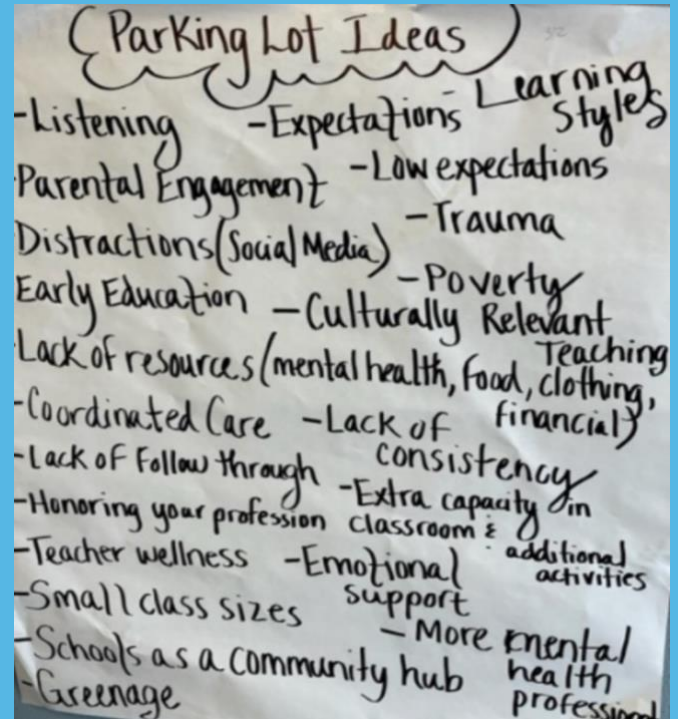
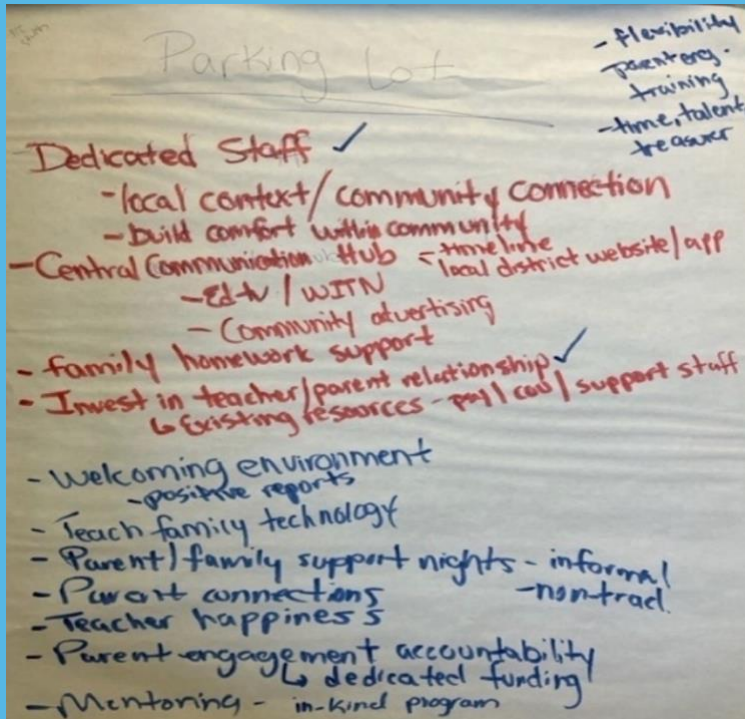
- Students need more trips and experiences.
- Make sure parents are bought into the importance of on time attendance and learning.
- Robust behavioral health supports are needed.
- Meet families where they are.
- Clear communication with all stakeholders.
- Engage parents about what they need. Could be classes.
- Bring families and community into schools.
- Reimburse or provide teachers with support for expenses they incur (granola bars for students, supplies, etc.).

Parent Engagement Group:

- Dedicated family engagement staff is needed.
- Build comfort in the community.
- Communication is key.
- Invest in parent-school relationships.
- Schools must be welcoming environments.
- Dedicated funding for parent engagement is needed.
- Flexibility to meet parent needs would be helpful.
- Mentoring supports could help too.

Watch WITN's coverage of the Stubbs event here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r-LMOZqB0Ho>

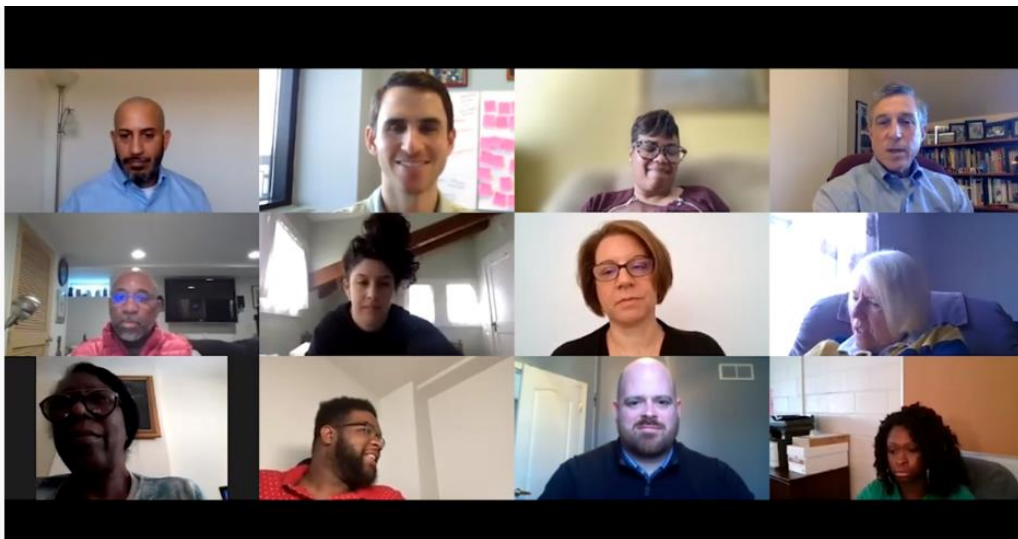
Poster Notes from Event at Stubbs:



Virtual Engagement Meeting – March 5

Feedback Received:

- Teacher and student wellbeing are critical.
- Trauma-informed and trauma-responsive lens to help address needs.
- Prioritize professional learning time, perhaps on a set day.
- Partnerships to support SEL and academics are needed.
- Structure day and year to meet needs.
- Must be field trips and experiences.
- Have to think through violence and its impact on students and staff.
- Can DHSS support schools with parent engagement? Must be embedded in services.
- Business partnerships are important.
- Need to publicize services so families know what is available.
- Student voice is key.
- Family homelessness and incarceration are barriers. Must be addressed and acknowledged.
- Need a high school option(s) near city.
- Staff retention should be a key priority of this effort.
- List all partners. Need to coordinate across them.
- Safety in the community is key.



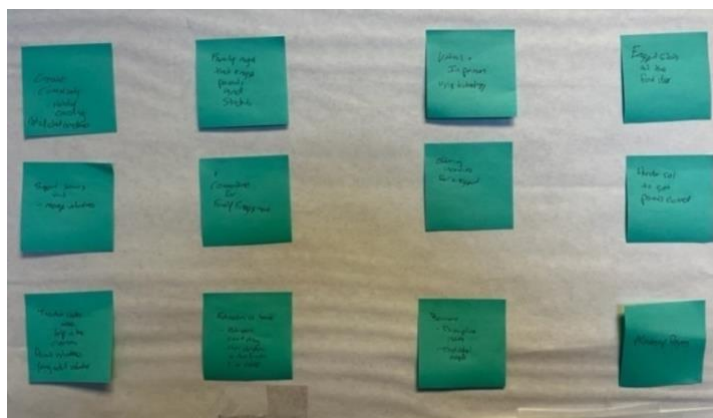
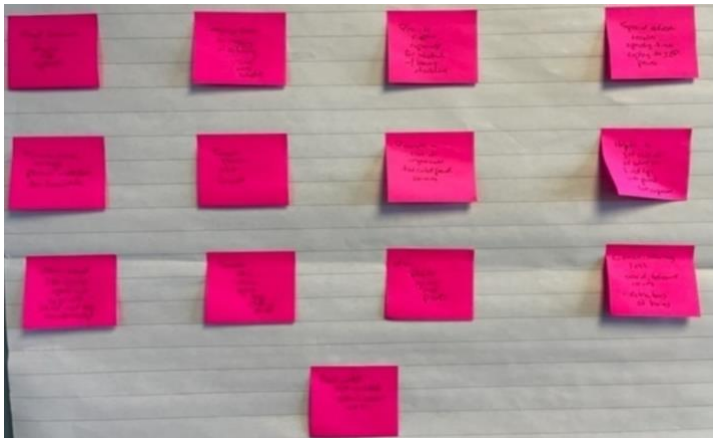
Watch the final share out of ideas:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=36x8goFHF4&t=32s>

Note that participants who had their cameras off do not appear on the video recording.

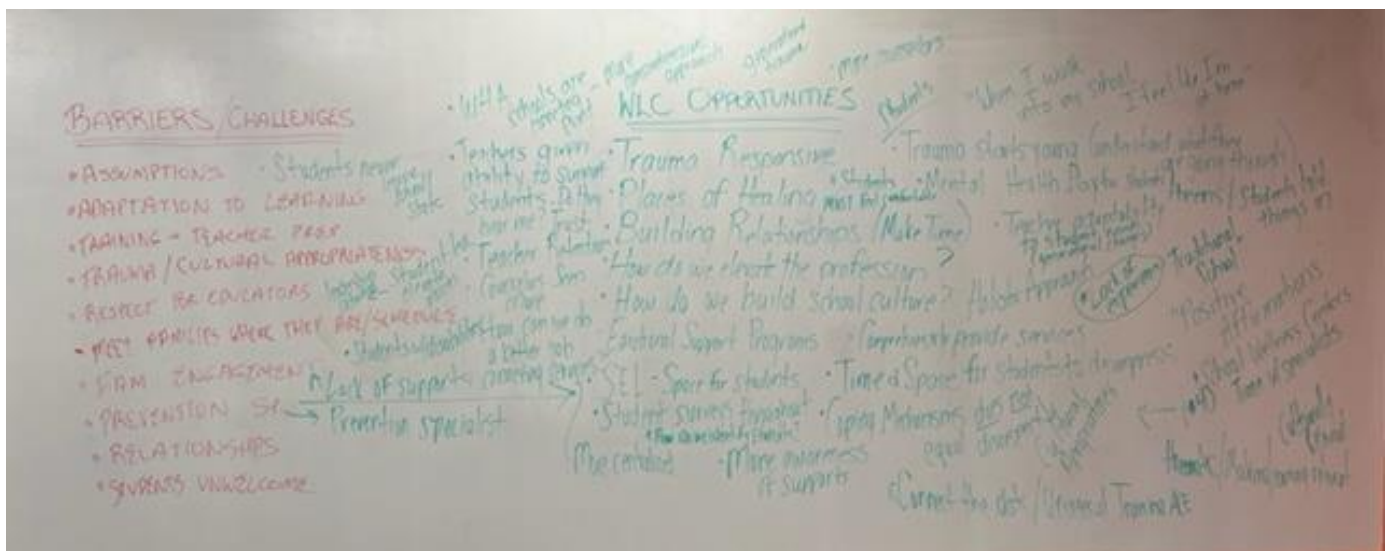
Harlan Elementary School – March 9

- Consider the need for closer neighborhood schools for all students.
- Equity in funding for city schools is necessary to meet needs.
- Raise expectations for city students.
- Empower the community and stakeholders.
- Have to support teachers to reduce burnout.
- Focus on teacher wellness.
- Schools must be “all inclusive.”
- Coordinate care in our schools.
- Have parents and students learning together.
- Coordination of volunteers.
- Business and nonprofit partnerships.
- Get parents excited about schools.
- Counseling for whole family.
- Volunteer tutors needed.
- Use the summer.
- Educator diversity is important.
- Everyone needs to experience success.
- Nutrition is key



Teen Warehouse – March 12

- We are missing family engagement time and the chance to authentically engage families.
- Expand parent academy and have parent accountability.
- Teacher prep and higher education need to have a role.
- Prioritize relationships.
- What are the best practices internationally?
- SEL staff and resources are needed.
- Extracurricular programs are important at schools.
- Need to take things off teachers' plates.
- Almost need to start fresh/reset.
- Help students have experiences.
- Career ladders for teachers could help with retention.
- Provide incentives for teachers.
- Small class sizes.
- Relevant curriculum and things like financial literacy should be offered.
- Child care support would help.
- Need more paras in the classrooms. Look to community members.
- Principals need flexibility around spending, curricula, training.
- Teachers need a say in decision-making.
- Teacher incentives for career ladder.
- Make learning relevant.
- Field trips are key – experiential learning.



From Event at Teen Warehouse:

1. Missing: Family engagement - Time - Real opportunities for families to truly engage.

We need to look at higher ed. & teacher prep. programs.

From a student - "More interaction between educators & the students & families. Relationships matter"

More autonomy in the classroom. Not enough time to connect with students. Quality SEL curriculum supported by counselors who can support students in a timely manner.

The Parent Academy needs to be expanded to RC & BS
School Clubs - Wad. - Use or look at the International Model

1. Missing: SEL staff & resources
"More extra-curricular activities
(Field Day - Field Trips)

2. Practical Curriculum that is relevant (Financial Literacy)
(Home ec. type class)

3. Support Needed: capacity for teachers to teach (minimize other responsibilities) An opportunity to "start fresh" w programming.

4. We need "opportunities & experience"

5. Engage students in how they are going to learn.

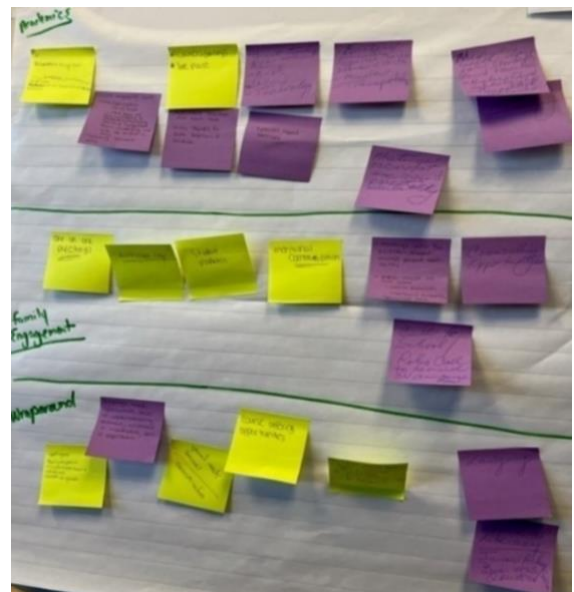
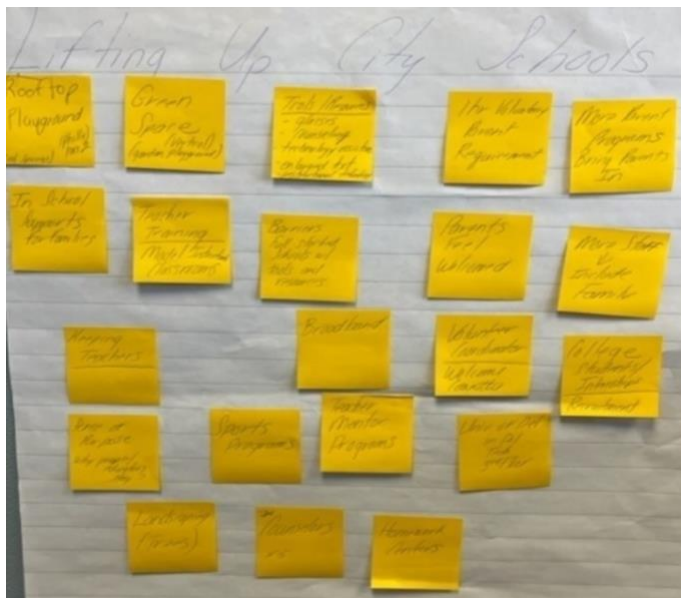
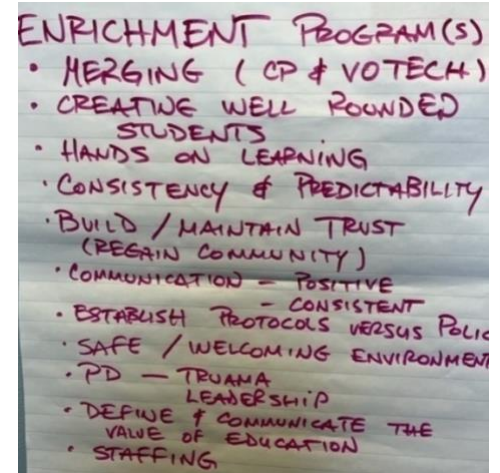
6. The best educators: make class relevant, enjoyable, hands-on,

7. Career ladders

8. Incentives (Parking, Taxes, etc.) How do we draw educators to recruitment!
Small class sizes - Prior

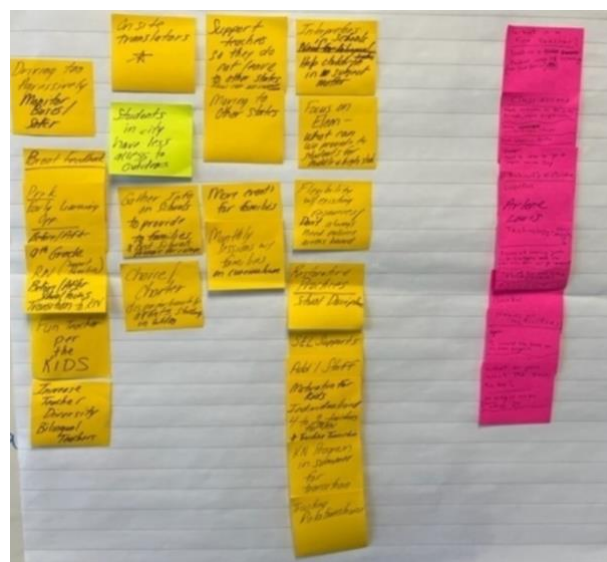
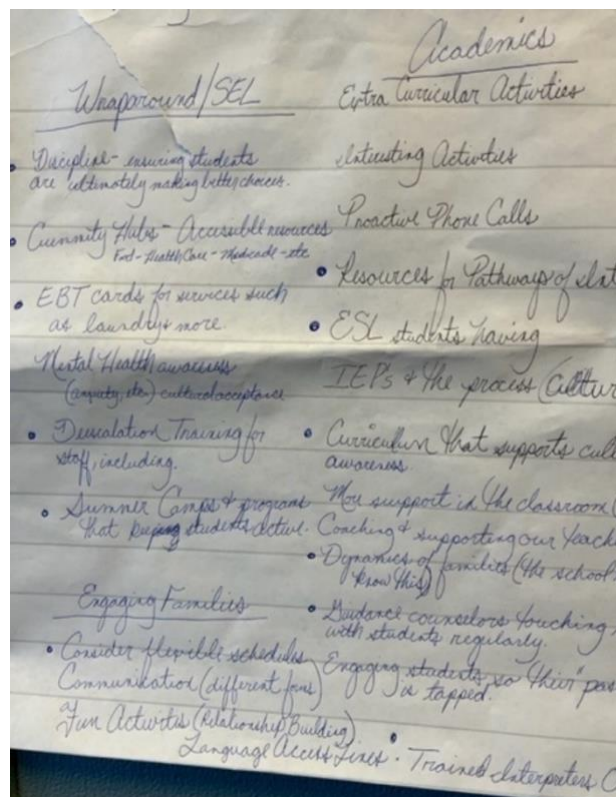
Wilmington Public Library – March 22

- Enrichment programs are needed
- Focus on well-rounded students.
- More hands-on learning for students.
- Regain community trust that has been eroded.
- Communication is really important. Intentional, positive communication is needed.
- Recognize achievements and successes of students and staff.
- Extracurriculars for all students.
- Special needs services must be strengthened.
- Schools should be welcoming for families.
- Professional learning on trauma and leadership.
- Great teaching should be celebrated.
- Increase mentorship opportunities.
- Financial literacy should be offered.
- More access to counseling.
- Rooftop playgrounds for city schools.
- Homework centers to help students after school.
- Must keep teachers. Prioritize retention.
- Improved school environments.
- Broadband support for families.
- Get creative with staffing – high school and college students.
- Consider a parent volunteer requirement.
- Students need access to dental services and vision supports.
- More staff.



Latin American Community Center (LACC) – March 24

- On-site interpretation services at schools for families.
- Family engagement around children's learning.
- Clear information about schools in multiple languages.
- Project based learning.
- Support for transitions (to K, MS, HS).
- Added staff are needed.
- SEL focus to support students.
- Meet family needs.
- Support the whole child – think about dental clinics.
- Mentoring for students.
- Restorative practices.
- Focus on special education support.
- More pre-k support.
- Arts and engaging summer programming.
- Students need field trips.
- Homework help for parents.
- More support on transportation/buses.
- Flexibility for schools.
- Family centered activities.
- Technology help for families.
- Parent engagement.
- Create time to build relationships.
- Proactive and positive phone calls home.
- Summer camps for children are needed.
- De-escalation training.
- Social service support for children.
- Schools must be community hubs.
- ESL classes for families.
- Culturally relevant curricular supports.



From Event at Latin American Community Center:



COVID POSITIVES

- * CLOSENESS w/ FAMILIES
- * TECHNOLOGY 1 on 1; TD FOR PARENTS
- * ASSIGNMENTS
- * FLEXIBILITY IN MULTIPLE AREAS
- * ASSESS

ACADEMIC

- HANDS ON, ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES
- F/Ts (GUEST SPEAKERS)
- MUSIC, ARTS SPORTS ACTIVITIES
- WRITING VS TECHNOLOGY
- * DEDICATE TCHR
- * ADD'L STAFF
- * COMMUNITY VALUE EDUCAT

PARENT ENGAGEMENT

- FLEXIBILITY OF TIMING
- FAMILY CENTER ACTIVITIES
- LINK w/ POLICIES

WRAP AROUND

SEL FOR ALL (STUDENTS, STAFF)

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (DONATIONS & MARKETING)

OUT OF SCHOOL

TRANSPORTATION

BRIDGE LEARNING

COUNSELING

ACTIVITIES (NOT ON COMPUTERS)

Educator Zooms and School Visits

Any effort to strengthen schools must consistently be grounded in the experiences of educators. The following feedback was compiled from numerous meetings, calls, and visits with educators, including, but not limited to:

- November Zoom with the DSEA executive board and December individual follow up Zooms
- December Zoom with Red Clay city educators
- December Zoom with Christina city educators
- December Zoom with Harlan educators
- December school visit to Bancroft
- December school visit to Warner
- January school visit to Harlan
- January school visit to Bayard/Pulaski
- February school visit to Shortlidge
- February school visit to Lewis
- March Zoom with Red Clay city teachers
- March Zoom with Christina city teachers
- Individual Zooms or phone calls with educators from Skyline, Richardson Park, Bancroft, Stubbs, Pulaski, Lewis, Bush, Mt. Pleasant, and Shortlidge, many of whom submitted feedback on the de.gov/wlc site

Educator Support:

- With COVID, people are so tired and burned out.
- Need to relieve educator stress.
- Teacher liaisons in each building to work with DOE/WLC/district.
- Educator compensation needs to be addressed.
- Pacing requirements are in conflict with meeting student needs.
- Engage with child care staff as well.
- Create better working conditions.
- Need additional staff.
- Shared decision-making could be great.
- Take unnecessary work off educator plates.
- Give educators the gift of time.
- Need subs in buildings.
- Treat teachers like the professionals they are.
- Class sizes must be low.
- Support district early childhood staff before just expanding to more seats.

Previous Reform Efforts:

- What makes this different than other efforts?
- Hopeful this is not like Priority Schools.
- Seen so many past efforts.

Wraparound Services:

- Need the behavioral health staff to effectively meet student needs.
- All city schools should be community schools.
- Services are not reaching those who need them most.
- Prioritize relationships.
- SEL must be integrated across schools.
- Need more social workers.
- Don't neglect the needs of teens.
- Too many meetings; educators should get to focus on teaching.
- Must meet needs of most vulnerable students.
- Have to connect and monitor services and supports.
- Engage trusted partners to help this work.
- Establish mentoring programs.
- Must be trauma-responsive environments.

Student Achievement:

- Early childhood education should be expanded, so students reach K ready to learn.
- Include diverse books.
- Need tons of resources and money.
- Smaller class sizes are needed.
- More support for students with IEPs.
- Early interventions for struggling readers.
- More staff to meet student needs.
- Must have fully staffed buildings.
- Classroom management support needed.
- Robust social studies, science, arts.
- Need focus on both student achievement and on play/creativity.
- Students need access to tutoring and extended day.
- Outdoor learning would be great for students.
- Strong leadership is key.
- Provide students with enrichment opportunities.

Family and Community Engagement:

- Need the right supports for the whole family.
- Meet the needs of families. Schools could help with food, clothing, laundry.
- Meet families where they are.
- Rethink and revisit parent engagement policies.
- Spotlight successful parent engagement stories/successes
- Create parent focus groups. Also create supports for grandparents.

Model:

- Should enable flexibility in schedules.
- Give teachers autonomy. Flexibility is key.
- Creating consistency makes sense.
- Past efforts have been predicated on blaming staff.
- Unified governance in the city is the biggest sell.
- The state must deliver.
- Educator leader teams make sense.
- Root cause analysis is really important.
- Governing board needs to be in these schools frequently.
- Be careful with extended day. Use community groups.
- Must be paired with sustainable funding.

Top Recurring Feedback:

- Additional resources and staff are critical.
- Must meet the behavioral health needs of our students.
- Timeline is too rushed.
- More paras in classrooms.
- Early interventions are key.
- More planning time is needed.

Lingering Questions and Concerns:

- What happens if districts say no?
- Consider including high school here too.
- Need supports for schools that WLC schools feed to.
- What does the shared curriculum look like? Who decides this?
- How does this relate to the current CSD MOU?
- Why only focus on Wilmington? There are needs downstate too.
- Timeline is too fast for real collaboration.



Conclusion

As the work of establishing and building the WLC continues, there will be more opportunities to share feedback. The goal of the MOU process is to create a structure that empowers educators, families, school leaders, and the community. Much of the work of building the details will happen in the coming months, after the MOU is completed. These meetings and conversations have shown why a structure like the WLC is needed: decisions are best made by those closest to children and communities. The success of this work will depend on the details that will be built out by schools, educators, leaders, families, and community members.

For continued updates, please visit de.gov/wlc.

**WILMINGTON
LEARNING
COLLABORATIVE**